

## The Girl Reading This by [littleboxesofstars](#)

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**Summary:**

Now that she's in high school, Hopper decides Eleven deserves to have a cell phone. But a cell phone comes with the internet, and it gives El a plethora of new questions, so Memelord Lucas Sinclair decides to take her under his wing.

## The Girl Reading This

### Author's Note:

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I just wanted a fic of Lucas and Eleven being friends, and it somehow turned into a pseudo 5 times fic feat. memes. I exist to make myself laugh, but hopefully it'll make you laugh too. also posted to my tumblr @trash-the-tozier

Hopper both loved and hated the idea of getting Eleven a cell phone. He was used to hiding her away, keeping her as secretive as possible, but a cell phone meant the internet. Everything could be found by anyone on the internet, including his daughter (she was his daughter now, *god*, he always had to do a double take on his life when remembering that). But she needed to be a normal teenager. He wanted her to have a good, normal high school experience, and he knew that meant getting her a smartphone. But knowing he could always contact her did appease him a bit, and the Find My Phone feature that Joyce told him about was a plus.

Eleven was thrilled by the gift. She'd already played around with her friends' phones, beaten all of their high scores on the games they had (though Lucas insisted that using her powers on Crossy Road was definitely cheating), and figured out things like text messages and Snapchat. But she couldn't wait to have her own phone, mostly because that meant she could talk to Mike whenever she wanted.

"No calling that boy after ten at night." Hopper had told her, letting her open the box it came in on her own. She just gave a little nod, beaming ear to ear, and he couldn't help but smile as he watched her power the device on, practically bouncing in her seat. Hopper added his number into her phone, made sure she did the same for him, and made sure she had her number memorized before he consented to letting her go out. She practically ran to the Wheelers' house, letting herself into the basement as usual.

"El!" Mike exclaimed, surprised but happy to see her, smiling and getting to his feet.

"I have a phone!" She told him happily, brandishing the cell phone at him. It had a large screen and a sparkly blue and gold case, Mike looking it over and nodding appreciatively.

"It's pretty." He said. She gave him a look.

"You like pretty things." She told him, almost accusingly.

"Everybody does!" He defended, and El laughed. He looked at her again, as though the word had reminded him all over again that she was there. "Also, hi."

"Hi." She responded, and he leaned forward to kiss her on the cheek. He still blushed a little when he kissed her, and she liked that.

"Let me give you our friends' phone numbers." Mike said, picking his own phone up off the couch, flopping down on the piece of furniture. Eleven followed suit, resting her head against his shoulder. "Open up the icon of a little person. That's the contacts."

Between Lucas's explanation of what an icon was (there was Beyonce and Bill Nye, whom she loved, but also someone named Smashmouth, whom she found annoying) and Dustin's explanation of dwarves after a Dragons in Dungeons game one afternoon, Eleven wasn't exactly sure of what "little person icon" was supposed look like. She was expecting something much more exciting than the head and shoulders of a humanoid shape when Mike tapped it, and felt a bit disappointed.

"Put Will's name on that line." He told her, pointing. "And this is his phone number. He always has his volume turned all the way up, so unless he's sleeping or he's drawing or something, he'll always text you back."

El nodded, typing out a message.

*I got a phone.*

"Make sure you say who it's from." Mike said quickly, her thumb hovering over the 'send' button. "He doesn't know what your number is yet."

*I got a phone from El.*

The response was pretty quick.

*From: Will*

*Great! Now we can talk whenever you want!*

She nodded a bit. Lucas didn't find the message quite so clear.

*From: Lucas*

*Mike? Your girlfriend got you a cell phone?*

*To: Lucas*

*No it's from Dad it's from Hopper.*

*From: Lucas*

*Your father-in-law got you a cell phone?*

Mike blushed bright red and snatched the device out of her hands, correcting and clearing the air. Max sent back two exclamation points and a smiley face, and Dustin found the news exciting enough to hop on his bike and make his way to Mike's house. It was nice to have someone as excitable as Dustin to share her happiness with, El reminded all over again of how fantastic he was. He added her to a number of ongoing group chats, then began downloading an app onto her phone.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Mike asked quickly.

"Twitter." Dustin answered. "We've gotta make her one."

"What's she going to use it for?" Mike asked back. He looked slightly uneasy. "I'm not sure Hopper would be okay with this."

"It's just Twitter." Dustin waved his fears away easily. "Besides, Max answers tweets better than she answers texts, unless it's stupid Lucas. You want one, right El?"

Completely clueless, Eleven nodded and Dustin beamed. He made her account, set everything up, and tried to show her how to use it.

El didn't really understand Twitter but she still liked it, scrolling

through the app to see the various thoughts her friends had throughout the day. Max tweeted the most, Lucas a close second, though a lot of what he did was called retweeting. It was always pictures with words that seemed out of context, or didn't make much sense. Finally, in the middle of a Mortal Kombat tournament, she had to ask.

"Lucas?"

"Yeah?"

"Who is..." She squinted at the screen, saying the words slowly to make sure she got them right. "Who is the girl reading this?"

The question took a moment to register, but when it finally did the entire basement exploded in laughter. Their reaction was amusing enough to make her smile, but it didn't answer her question, so she waited.

"It's just a meme." Lucas said.

"Meme?"

"It's you." Mike told her. "You're the one that read it, aren't you?"

"But I'm not..." She read the tweet again. "I'm not a badass bitch."

"You totally are." Dustin said, and she frowned.

"I'm bad?"

"Oh my god Mike, your girlfriend is adorable."

They explained badass to her first, and she nodded in understanding.

"But what's meme?"

They all turned to Lucas, since it was his tweet that started this whole conversation in the first place. None of his explanations made any sense, and after attempt number four, he gave up.

"Just come over to my house tomorrow, if you want. I'll teach you."

Always eager to learn, El nodded.

Lucas didn't understand why he was nervous to have Eleven come over to his house. Maybe because she never had, really. Not on her own, at least. They didn't talk much one-on-one, with just the two of them. There was always some mediator, some Dustin, Mike, or even Max to fill the silence or continue the conversation. Not this time though. He told himself it was stupid. He would risk his life for hers, and had actually done so on multiple occasions; he shouldn't feel weird about her being in his living room and yet here he was, rubbing his hands together as he sat on the couch and waiting for her to come to the door.

When she arrived she had her oversized overalls on, a notebook tucked under her arm, and a pen tucked behind her ear, just barely sticking out through her mass of curly hair. Her expression was determined, and he laughed a little.

"I know I said I would teach you, but I didn't really mean it. You didn't need to bring a notebook and everything. It's kinda just something dumb."

"It makes you laugh." El insisted. "Not dumb."

She smiled at him a little, and he clapped his hands together. It was time to do the impossible: explain the senseless jokes of the internet to a girl that had lived in isolation so completely that her name was a number. Okay. He went to his laptop, sitting open on the coffee table, and started his powerpoint presentation.

"This first one is easy." He said. "It's a picture that's just funny on its own, and there are a bunch of different kinds. His... His name is Pepe, and he's weird. Just a warning."

"...Pepe." El repeated. "Okay."

Lucas moved the powerpoint forward to the next slide, the classic Pepe picture staring back at them. El screeched in laughter, clapping

her hands over her mouth and collapsing into giggles on the couch. Lucas laughed in incredulity, having never heard her make that sound before, looking down at her. Her bangs were almost completely covering her face, but he could see that her eyes were closed as she laughed.

"I told you he's weird!" He insisted, and she shook her head a little, letting her hands drop into her lap, one on each thigh.

"Just... Mouthbreathers call Mike 'frog face'." She said, giggling again when Lucas's mouth fell open.

"You think Wheeler looks like Pepe?!"

"No, no!" She waved her hand desperately, shaking her head more. "Big eyes, that's all."

Lucas was too far gone. It was too funny. He had to tweet about it--@*RangerLuke: this just in, @mikeypaladin 's girlfriend thinks he looks like pepe* --before attempting to explain what context Pepe was used in, which was nearly every context, and moved on. They skipped over Slenderman, because that was a little too close to the demogorgon. Evil Kermit was difficult to explain.

"Talking to yourself, but bad?"

"You know!" He tried to think of a situation she could relate to. "Like... When you're supposed to be doing something, but you'd rather do something else, kind of."

She sat there for a moment, then her eyes widened.

"The dishes." She murmured.

"Were you supposed to do the dishes?" He asked, amused, and she nodded a little. A couple of hours and way too many old memes later, Lucas deemed El internet ready. Or, as ready as he could make her. Then he released her into the world.

Dustin's favorite group chat was 'fuckbois and the fuckfather', which had The Party and Steve in it. It was used mainly for shit-talking Billy and getting advice on girls, despite El and Max also being in it (usually with Max rebutting all of the tips Steve gave them). El hadn't yet said anything, though she did read just about every message sent. Dustin figured it was just because, while friendly when they did see each other, Eleven didn't know Steve like the rest of them did. Then one day, out of the blue, she sent them all a picture.

It was her, the sun on her face, beaming. She had her arm around the shaggiest dog Dustin had ever seen, a boot in the corner that Dustin figured must belong to Hopper, clearly the photographer.

*From: The Mage*  
*Lucas!! Is this doge?*

*From: The Zoomer*  
*el omg ur so cute*

*From: The Ranger*  
*...yes, El. Sure. That's a doge.*

Over the next couple of weeks, whenever Eleven saw a dog, she would point and say "Doge!" with the excitement to match a kid in a candy shop. If none of them were around, she would send them a picture of the dog, with herself also in it if the owner allowed. It made for a rather adorable collection. Their most recent addition was a photo Will took, El holding up that was possibly the smallest, fluffiest poodle puppy Dustin had ever seen, getting a lick on the nose.

*From: The Cleric*  
*El wants everyone to know that she found another doge.*

Less than a minute later, Mike sent him a text; not to the group chat, just to Dustin himself.

*From: The Paladin*  
*...dustin, i'm in love with her.*



“Do you know how to braid?” Max asked, and Eleven shook her head. “Well, do you want to learn? I’ve got a bunch of hair to practice on.” She tugged on her fiery locks. It was already damaged enough by years of forgetting to add conditioner that nothing El could do would hurt it, and it had been yanked on so many times that her scalp wasn’t sensitive anymore. Eleven smiled and nodded, thanking Max quickly.

It felt a little weird for Max, who had always considered herself such a tomboy, to be teaching Eleven things like hair styles. Usually Mike’s fancy sister Nancy did that stuff. But Max knew how to braid, the style an easy and practical way to keep her hair out of her face, so she’d taught herself. It wouldn’t be too hard to teach El too, and it would probably be useful; those curls were getting a little rowdy.

It was nearing midnight, the two of them getting giggly as they sat on Max’s bed and talked about nothing in particular. After a rocky start, a few explanations, and a few apologizes, Max was glad to have Eleven as her friend. It was good to get away from the stupid boys sometimes. They had sleepovers every other weekend, alternating houses at first, but Hopper looked as awkward around her as she felt around him, so their sleepover location had more or less been permanently moved to her place.

“What happened?” El asked quietly, Max jumping a bit. Always in disregard of personal space, El had paused in her third attempt at braiding and was looking incredibly closely at her head, near the top of her cheekbone. Then El poked her, and she winced. “Hurt?”

“Oh, that.” Max leaned away a little, swallowing, wanting Eleven to please stop looking at the bruise on the side of her face. She’d been covering it with some of her mom’s makeup, but they’d washed their faces and brushed their teeth an hour ago, and she’d forgotten about it. “It’s nothing.”

Usually, Max was good at lying. But it was hard to lie to El, and maybe it was late, but she felt a bit choked up. Eleven fixed her with a look.

“Max.” She insisted.

“Yeah, friends, and all that.” Max frowned, getting from her bed to examine the injury more closely in her mirror. It had faded a good amount, the blues and purples replaced by ugly greens and faint yellows. “Billy shoved me into a dresser a couple of days ago.”

Billy left her and her friends alone for the most part, but still got in a cheap shot where he could. After hearing about El making the school bully Troy pee himself, Max desperately wished Eleven would give Billy what was coming to him, too. Like drop a set of bleachers on him, or something. El frowned.

“Shoved you?”

“He swears it was an accident, and it wasn’t worth it to argue with him.” Max shrugged and sighed, sitting heavily back onto the bed. She didn’t want to talk about this anymore. She didn’t want to cry in front of El. “He’s an asshole.”

El wrapped a comforting arm around her shoulders, soft and warm in her set of spotted cotton pajamas.

“He’s Walmart.” She said. Her tone was incredibly serious, feeling in complete contradiction the words coming out of her mouth. “You’re Chanel, Max.”

Max couldn’t help it, beginning to giggle, resting her head against El’s.

“Thanks.”

*From: El*  
*He’s right though it is late.*

*To: El*  
*yeah*

Mike rolled over under his sheets. They’d just both been told off for

talking on the phone at 10:30 p.m. on a school night, Hopper first reprimanding El, the taking her cell phone and telling Mike off as well. Then he'd bade him a rather stiff goodnight, and hung up. Surprisingly though, he hadn't taken El's phone away from her, and they'd simply continued texting. It wasn't as good as hearing her voice, but it was better than nothing. At the same time though, he didn't want to keep her up too late.

*To: El*

*go ahead and go to sleep. we'll talk tomorrow.*

*From: El*

*Yes okay. Hold on though I found this.*

She was still typing, so he waited.

*From: El*

*This is you*

It was a picture, the words on the photo reading "the floor is appreciating your girlfriend", above an image of a man lying facedown on the floor. Mike knew he should be worried about where on the internet Eleven was going to get photos like this, but the contents of the message had Mike surprised and happy all at once.

*To: El*

*you feel like I appreciate you?*

*From: El*

*Yes*

The message was followed by a heart emoji, and suddenly Mike couldn't stop smiling, a familiar warm and happy feeling in his chest (that definitely *wasn't* heartburn, as Dustin had suggested). He was glad he was managing to be a decent boyfriend, despite the misgivings he occasionally had about not being good enough for someone like her. He wanted then to confess his love to her, but he knew that "I love you" wasn't something you said at near 11:00 p.m. on a Wednesday night through a text message.

*To: El*

*that's good, because I really do.*

*From: El*

*I do too*

There was a silent moment of Mike staring at his phone screen, looking at the silly picture that had brought this conversation on before he realized that it really was time for them to go to sleep.

*To: El*

*night El, sweet dreams.*

*From: El*

*Goodnight Mike. You're my favorite person in the world.*

Mike felt his heart skip a beat, feeling silly and happy all at once. The urge to tell her rose in him all over again, timing and etiquette be damned, but he knew he wanted to do this right.

*To: El*

*I have something I need to tell you tomorrow, alright? don't let me forget.*

And the next day, he did. They walked home together like always, Eleven turning to look at him every couple of steps. Finally, a grin on his face, he swung their entwined hands and glanced back.

“Yeah?”

“You have something to tell me.” She reminded him, as though he'd forgotten. As though he could forget this.

“I do.” He agreed. They were close to El's house, the rest of The Party having branched off to stay in the neighborhood, and now they had nothing but trees all around them. He leaned down, kissing her quickly. She was smiling as he pulled back, and he tucked some hair behind her ear. He felt a jump of nerves in his chest as she looked at him, but shook the feeling off. He wasn't afraid. He wasn't expecting anything back from her; he had always been emotionally open and honest with El, and simply wanted her to know.

“I just had to tell you... I love you.”

Her mouth opened a bit as her eyes widened in surprise, her expression reminding him of the first time he had kissed her, the memory making him smile. He saw her searching her mind for something to say, and he waited. Finally, she spoke.

“I’m shook.”

Mike was going to kill Lucas.

“Augh!” Dustin let out an anguished groan, Will sighing and letting his controller fall into his lap. They’d lost their third round of Overwatch in a row, the yells their audience (consisting of a frustrated Lucas, disappointed Max, and annoyed Mike) still ringing in his ears. Dustin was lying flat on his back on the floor, El frowning at the screen.

“You guys suck.” Max said. “Can it be our turn now?”

She held her hand out. Since there was no split screen multiplayer, when they pooled their resources together, only three of them could play Overwatch at a time. Will was ready to give the game up, but Dustin sat up fast.

“No! We have to win at least once.” He insisted. “This isn’t about Overwatch. This is about honor.”

“Maybe if you played as a team and stopped leaving El out to dry, she would actually be able to heal you idiots.” Mike pointed out, his eyebrows raised.

“Yeah, Mike?” Dustin was heated. “Maybe your girlfriend just sucks.”

Mike opened his mouth, but before he could say anything, Eleven whirled on Dustin.

“What the fuck did you just fucking say about me, you little bitch?”

All mouths dropped. Completely straight-faced, El continued.

“I’ll have you know I graduated top of my class in the Navy Seals, and I’ve been involved in numerous secret raids on Al-Qaeda, and I have over 300 confirmed kills.”

“El--” Mike tried, but Eleven barely stopped to breathe.

“I am trained in gorilla warfare and I’m the top sniper in the entire US armed forces. You are nothing to me but just another target. I will wipe you the fuck out with precision the likes of which has never been seen before on this Earth, mark my fucking words.”

Will had to pinch himself to make sure he wasn't actually asleep, though he wasn't sure if this would be a dream or a nightmare. This was the most he had ever heard Eleven say in his whole life, and by the looks on everyone's faces, they'd never heard her say this much either.

“You think you can get away with saying that shit to me over the Internet? Think again, fucker. As we speak I am contacting my secret network of spies across the USA and your IP is being traced right now so you better prepare for the storm, maggot. The storm that wipes out the pathetic little thing you call your life. You’re fucking dead, kid. I can be anywhere, anytime, and I can kill you in over seven hundred ways, and that’s just with my bare hands.”

“Lucas.” Max's voice was soft with amazement and vague horror. “What did you do to her?”

“Not only am I extensively trained in unarmed combat, but I have access to the entire arsenal of the United States Marine Corps and I will use it to its full extent to wipe your miserable ass off the face of the continent, you little shit.”

The cursing. The *cursing*. Max had collapsed into a pile of laughter on Lucas's shoulder, who had his cheeks puffed out painfully in an attempt to stay quiet.

“If only you could have known what unholy retribution your little “clever” comment was about to bring down upon you, maybe you would have held your fucking tongue. But you couldn’t, you didn’t, and now you’re paying the price, you goddamn idiot. I will shit fury

all over you and you will drown in it.”

“E-Eleven...” Dustin held his hands placating to his chest, but he was grinning, recognizing her words. He’d used the copypasta extensively when it had first began circulating, Will remembered. But Dustin had never gone as far as memorizing it. “I didn’t... I didn’t mean--”

“You’re fucking dead, kiddo.”

A ringing silence. Mike was staring, blinking, his mouth hanging open, and Will was sure he looked the same way. Dustin was a mix of amused and slightly terrified, and Will didn’t blame him. Max was wheezing in an attempt to breathe.

Then El’s face broke into a giant smile, practically bouncing in excitement. She turned to Lucas.

“I did it!” She exclaimed happily, beaming. “I did the whole thing!”

That was when Lucas broke, sliding off the couch and onto the floor as he laughed, laughing so hard and for so long that he had tears rolling down his face. That caused El to begin laughing too, and by the end of it they were all giggling.

“That was incredible.” Lucas told her, wiping his eyes and holding out his hand in offer of a high five. Grinning, El accepted it.